

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please substitute the following claims for the same numbered claims in the application.

Claims 1-13 (canceled).

Claim 14 (New): A method for determining a manner of classifying a sample in one of a number of predetermined classes, said method comprising:

computing a weight value for each of a plurality of classifiers, wherein said classifiers indicate a manner of classifying a sample in one of a number of predetermined classes;

calculating for each of said predetermined classes a weighted summation across said classifiers of a likelihood that the sample belongs to a particular class, weighted by said weight value; and

designating said sample as belonging to said class for which said weighted summation is greatest in value.

Claim 15 (New): The method of claim 14, wherein said weight value for a classifier comprises a sample confidence component, wherein said sample confidence component includes a linear combination of an order statistic.

Claim 16 (New): The method of claim 15, wherein said linear combination is defined by a log-likelihood of respective predetermined classes for classifiers corresponding to said sample.

Claim 17 (New): The method of claim 15, wherein said linear combination for a particular

sample comprises a difference between a most likely and a second most likely class associated with a particular classifier.

Claim 18 (New): The method of claim 16, wherein the weight value comprises said sample confidence component equaling said log-likelihood of respective predetermined classes for classifiers corresponding to said sample; and a cumulative component comprising a mean of said sample confidence component over a plurality of samples.

Claim 19 (New): The method of claim 18, wherein said cumulative component is successively updated with said sample confidence component of each said sample.

Claim 20 (New): A program storage device readable by computer, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by said computer to perform a method for determining a manner of classifying a sample in one of a number of predetermined classes, said method comprising:

computing a weight value for each of a plurality of classifiers, wherein said classifiers indicate a manner of classifying a sample in one of a number of predetermined classes;

calculating for each of said predetermined classes a weighted summation across said classifiers of a likelihood that the sample belongs to a particular class, weighted by said weight value; and

designating said sample as belonging to said class for which said weighted summation is greatest in value.

Claim 21 (New): The program storage device of claim 20, wherein said weight value for a classifier comprises a sample confidence component, wherein said sample confidence component includes a linear combination of an order statistic.

Claim 22 (New): The program storage device of claim 21, wherein said linear combination is defined by a log-likelihood of respective predetermined classes for classifiers corresponding to said sample.

Claim 23 (New): The program storage device of claim 21, wherein said linear combination for a particular sample comprises a difference between a most likely and a second most likely class associated with a particular classifier.

Claim 24 (New): The program storage device of claim 22, wherein the weight value comprises said sample confidence component equaling said log-likelihood of respective predetermined classes for classifiers corresponding to said sample; and a cumulative component comprising a mean of said sample confidence component over a plurality of samples.

Claim 25 (New): The program storage device of claim 24, wherein said cumulative component is successively updated with said sample confidence component of each said sample.

Claim 26 (New): An apparatus for determining a manner of classifying a sample in one of a number of predetermined classes, said apparatus comprising:

means for computing a weight value for each of a plurality of classifiers, wherein said

classifiers indicate a manner of classifying a sample in one of a number of predetermined classes;

means for calculating for each of said predetermined classes a weighted summation across said classifiers of a likelihood that the sample belongs to a particular class, weighted by said weight value; and

means for designating said sample as belonging to said class for which said weighted summation is greatest in value.